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Divinely Inspired? An Interesting Event in 1672

BRIAN A. SMITH, D.C.

George Fox was born in the small farming community Fenny Dray, Leicestershire, England in July 1624. He is credited with being the founder of the Society of Friends, more commonly known as the Quakers.

In 1671 he sailed to Barbados, then to Jamaica before heading to the British colonies in North America in January 1672. He traveled the eastern seaboard for almost a year and a half before returning to England in May 1673. He passed through what was then the province of East Jersey several times, often staying with an acquaintance who also hailed from Leicestershire, Richard Hartshorne (1641-1722) (1). Hartshorne was living in Middletown Harbor, some five miles distant from Middletown proper.

One such visit occurred on the "seventy-seventh of the Sixth month" which I believe to have been 27 August 1672. (The Julian calendar with the first month of the year being March was still in use at this time.) Fox disliked using the given name of the months as some were named after pagan deities: January from Janus, March from Mars, et cetera.

Before August was through, Fox found himself in the



town of Shrewsbury, one of the few towns in East Jersey inhabited by Europeans. The Friend's Meeting House there was a sizable structure for the time. The current structure was built on the site of the earlier meeting house in 1816 and is thought to be almost an exact replica of the first one. During his brief stay there, an event occurred that Fox described in his autobiography which is quoted along with a reference note made by the editor of the reprinted biography:

While we were at Shrewsbury, and accident befell, which for a time was a great exercise to us. John Jay, a Friend of Barbadoes, who came with us from Rhode Island, and intended to accompany us through the woods to Maryland, being to try a horse, got upon his back, and the horse fell a-running, cast him down upon his head, and broke his neck, as the people said. Those that were near him took him up as dead, carried him a good way, and laid him on a tree.

I got to him as soon as I could; and feeling him, concluded he was dead. As I stood pitying him and his family, I took hold of his hair, and his head turned any way, his neck was so limber. Whereupon I took his head in both my hands, and, setting my knees against the tree, I raised his head, and perceived there was nothing out or broken that way.

Then I put one hand under his chin, and the other hand behind his head and raised his head two or three times with all my strength, and brought it in. I soon perceived his neck began to grow stiff again, and then he began to rattle in his throat, and quickly after to breathe.

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The people were amazed; but I bade them have a good heart, be of good faith, and carry him into the house. They did so, and set him by the fire. I bade them to get him something warm to drink, and put him to bed. After he had been in the house a while he began to speak; but did not know where he had been.

The next day we passed away (and he with us, pretty well) about sixteen miles to a meeting at Middletown, through woods and bogs, and over a river, where we swam our horses, and got over ourselves upon a hollow tree. Many hundred miles did he travel with us after this.

This narrative has sometimes been questioned and sometimes been taken to prove that Fox was an instrument in working miracles. Neither solution is satisfactory, or necessary. Recent medical annals give similar cases. A dislocated neck is not necessarily fatal. The incident shows again Fox's readiness in dealing coolly and skillfully with hard situations. He endeavors to do what can be done (2).



Friends Meeting House, Shrewsbury, New Jersey, 1816.

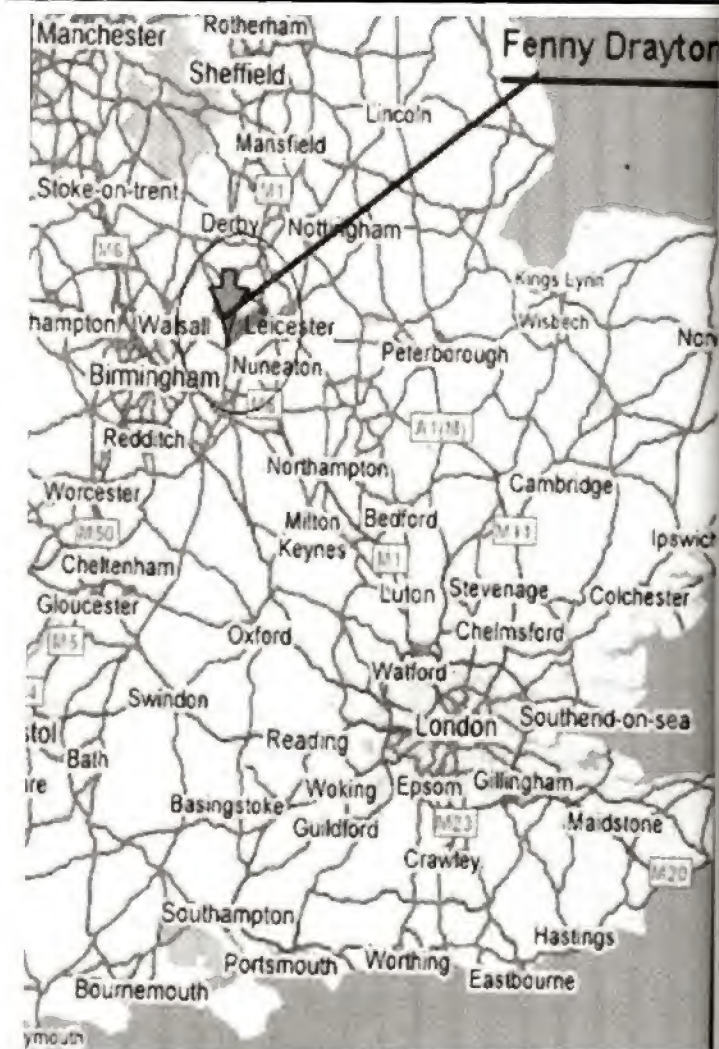
This crude maneuver can hardly be called chiropractic; but what is remarkable is that Fox, possessing no formal education in anatomy, would be so moved to perform such a maneuver, apparently without causing any damage. Of course, Jay had been declared dead by Fox and others in

attendance, thus limiting the possibility of further insult or injury!

One of the fascinating aspects of this incident is its association with a man of religion. Was Fox divinely inspired to do this? Is this a demonstration of Universal Intelligence acting through Fox's Innate Intelligence and Educated Mind? How many other incidents similar to this one involve an aspect of religion or spirituality?

D.D. Palmer was known to be active in the Spiritualism movement that swept the Mid-west during the latter half of the nineteenth century (3). While very much a student of anatomy and physiology, it would be a mistake to deliberately overlook Palmer's spirituality which he elaborated in the first chapter of his final book *The Chiropractor* (4).

As the realm of research advances, perhaps one day it will be possible to study the effect a concept as nebulous as spirit is now has on the result.



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